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## **Sen. Hardiman disappointed in governor's "pocket veto" of his health-care legislation**

**LANSING** – Sen. Bill Hardiman, R-Kentwood, expressed “extreme disappointment” in Gov. Granholm not approving Senate Bill 1150 which would have allowed health maintenance organizations more flexibility in health insurance products. Governor Granholm chose not to sign SB 1150, and her decision means the bill was pocket-vetoed and will not become law.

“I am disappointed by the Governor’s pocket-veto of SB 1150 because it would have meant health-maintenance organizations could offer plans with different co-payments to allow employers to maintain some level of health coverage,” Hardiman said.

Senate Bill 1150 would have retained the existing law that allows insurance purchasers to renew existing policies and the existing law requiring state approval of new rates. It would have allowed co-payments to vary so long as they were beneath a new statutory cap allowing insurance purchasers to continue some level of coverage. No services or covered benefits would have been cut under the legislation.

In commenting on the governor’s decision, Hardiman expressed concern for employers and ultimately employees confronted with rising health-care costs.

“I sponsored and pushed for Senate Bill 1150 because I heard from good, responsible employers that are struggling between maintaining some coverage for employees or simply canceling health coverage altogether,” Hardiman said. “I think state law should allow options that will keep some coverage in place rather than end coverage for workers and their employers. I am disappointed Governor Granholm apparently holds a different view — particularly since I had worked closely with officials in her administration to address their concerns.”

With the adjournment of the legislative session, another bill will have to be introduced next session to continue the debate and Hardiman pledged to do so.

“The governor’s action today unfortunately settles the fate of SB 1150, but it does not respond to the growing problem of health care costs and coverage for employers and workers. The losers today are those who might lose health coverage, or struggle to provide jobs with this cost of business. I will reintroduce a version of the bill because health care remains a vital need, and deserves a responsible state policy.”

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